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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional, descriptive study explored seven aspects of elementary teachers' job satisfaction across six categories of years of teaching experience and by gender. Surveys were mailed to 4,428 elementary teachers in 129 Ohio restructuring public schools. The surveys collected demographic data and measured job satisfaction using the National Followup Survey of Teacher Education Graduates. The return rate was 42 percent (N=1,877). All teacher ratings of job satisfaction were positive and differences were of degree rather than kind. Two-way ANOVA found no statistically significant interaction effects by gender and years of teaching experience on any items or total scale score. There were no statistically significant differences by gender or years of teaching experience in ratings of satisfaction with salary, opportunities for advancement, degree of autonomy/decision making, general working conditions, or total scale score. Teachers with over 26 years of teaching experience rated their satisfaction with interactions with colleagues higher than did teachers in the five other categories. Females rated satisfaction higher than males on job challenge, interaction with colleagues, and interaction with students. Both male and female teachers rated their satisfaction with teaching positively on all seven aspects. (Contains 4 tables and 14 references). (Author/SM)

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Male Elementary School Teachers' Ratings of Job Satisfaction

by Years of Teaching Experience

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the

Mid-South Educational Research Association

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Abstract

This cross-sectional, descriptive study explored seven aspects of elementary teachers' job satisfaction across six categories of years of teaching experience. Surveys were mailed to a census of 4,428 elementary teachers in 129 restructuring public schools in Ohio. Job satisfaction was measured with The National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates (scale range 1=very negative to 7=very positive). The return-rate was 42% ($n=1,877$). All teacher ratings of job satisfaction were positive and differences were of degree rather than kind. Two-way ANOVAs found no statistically significant ($p<.001$, effect size .01 or greater) interaction effects by gender and years of teaching experience on any items or total scale score. There were no statistically significant differences by gender or years of teaching experience in elementary teachers' ratings of satisfaction with salary (4.63), opportunities for advancement (5.02), degree of autonomy/decision making (4.64), or general work conditions (4.47), or total scale score (5.09). Teachers with 26 years or more teaching experience rated their satisfaction with interaction with colleagues higher than did teachers in the other five categories. Female elementary teachers rated their satisfaction higher than male teachers on satisfaction with (1) challenge of the job, (2) interaction with colleagues, and (3) interaction with students. Both male and female teachers rated their satisfaction with teaching positively on all seven aspects.

Male Elementary School Teachers' Ratings of Job Satisfaction
by Years of Teaching Experience

Teaching in American public schools in grades K-12 is largely a female pursuit. Discussions of the diversification of the American teaching force, have generally focused on two areas (1) the under-representation of people of color in the teaching force and (2) the under-representation of females in administrative positions (Montecinos & Nielsen, 1997). Few researchers have chosen to focus on the need for more males in the teaching force. The scarcity of male teachers as student role models is a subject of concern at all levels, but it is of particular concern in the early grades (Wood and Hoag, 1993). National statistics of teacher demographics indicate that the national teaching population is 72% female and 28% male. However, the gender statistics are even more disproportionate at the elementary level. Fewer than 2% of pre-K/Kindergarten and 14.6% of elementary teachers are male (Snyder & Hoffman, & Geddes, 1996). This lack of male role models in the early years of schooling may be a limiting factor in recruiting more males into the profession. Mancus (1992) found that male elementary teaching candidates reported that male more than female teachers influenced their views of teaching as a profession. The percentage of male elementary preservice candidates seemed to be rising in the 1970's (Schalock, 1979), however, this proved to be a very temporary trend. In 1991, the percentage of male teachers was at its lowest point since the National

Educational Association first measured the male-female ratio in 1961 (Feistritzer, 1991, cited in Gamble & Wilkins, 1997). Gamble and Wilkins (1997) asked administrators of 62 teacher education programs in New York State why there were a disproportional number of male students in preservice elementary education programs. These researchers reported:

In general, the comments made by professionals at the college level indicated that because elementary education is a traditionally female occupation, accompanied by low salary and low prestige, men are deterred from elementary teaching. This means that changes must be made to the perception of elementary education as a "female" profession (p. 191).

Is elementary school teaching a satisfying career for men? There have been very few studies looking at job satisfaction of male elementary teachers beyond the preservice and entry levels. In a study with a sample of 2225 recent graduates from 12 teacher education programs who were employed as teachers, Loadman and Klecker (1993) found that when asked about plans for "five years from now" male teachers were more likely than females to be planning a career move to school administration (14% of male respondents; 3% of female respondents). Brookhart and Loadman (1996) compared the ratings job satisfaction of 1,098 recent graduates of teacher education programs. They found that among four comparison groups (1) female elementary teachers; (2)

female high school teachers, (3) male elementary teachers, and (4) male high school teachers that female high school teachers rated their job satisfaction the highest and male elementary teachers rated their job satisfaction the lowest.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to extend the research on male elementary school teachers beyond preservice and first years of teaching.

Research questions that drove the study were:

1. What aspects of teaching do male elementary school teachers find the most and the least satisfying?
2. Are there gender differences in job satisfaction ratings of male and female elementary teachers?
3. Are there differences in male elementary school teachers ratings of job satisfaction across years of teaching experience?

Method

This was a descriptive, cohort group, research study using mailed survey questionnaires.

Sample

The sample for the study was 4,428 elementary teachers working in 129 Venture Capital schools. These schools were funded by the state legislature in Ohio to design their own restructuring plans and to implement them over a

five-year period. Because the Venture Capital School efforts involved the total school, a census survey was used to include each classroom teacher in the population.

Instrumentation

The Job Satisfaction Subscale of The National Survey of Teacher Education Graduates was used to measure job satisfaction (Freeman, Loadman, & Kennedy, 1994). The National Survey of Teacher Education Graduates is a teacher education follow-up survey instrument designed to gather responses to common items from graduates of different universities. A panel of evaluators from 10 teacher education institutions collected existing follow-up surveys to serve as an item pool. Items were drawn from the pool, edited, and new questions were added to match content not covered (Freeman, 1988). The instrument was piloted at The Ohio State University in 1988 and was revised in 1991 and 1994. The current instrument gathers data from graduates in six areas with four subscales. Documentation for content validity was prepared by matching the item content of the instrument to concepts from literature on teaching and teacher education (Brookhart, Loadman, & Freeman, 1989). The Job Satisfaction subscale of this instrument measures job satisfaction on seven aspects (1) salary/fringe benefits, (2) opportunities for professional advancement, (3) level of personal/professional challenge, (4) level of

professional autonomy/decision making authority, (5) general work conditions (hours, class size, work load, etc), (6) interactions with colleagues, and (7) interactions with students. Satisfaction with these aspects of teaching is rated on a Likert-type seven-point item rating scale. The scale ranges from 1=very negative to 7=very positive. Cronbach's alpha reliability of the subscale with data from 2,225 respondents in the National Database for Teacher Education Follow-up was .79 (Loadman & Klecker, 1993).

Demographic Data.

Demographic data were collected through self-report. The six categories used to measure "Years of Teaching Experience" were (1) five years or fewer, (2) six to 10 years, (3) 11 to 15 years, (4) 16 to 20 years, (5) 21 to 25 years, and (6) 26 years and more.

Data Collection.

A packet containing a cover letter, a questionnaire for each classroom teacher, and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope was mailed to the Venture Capital coordinator in each elementary school. The number of teachers in the 129 schools ranged from seven to 57. The cover letter emphasized that the purpose of the survey was to "picture" the participation of each teacher in each school (Klecker & Loadman, 1995). An envelope was attached to each questionnaire with instructions to the teachers to complete the questionnaire,

seal it in the envelope, and return it to the coordinator. A summary of the study and the data for the individual school (aggregated for confidentiality) was promised to each school.

Return Rates.

The overall return rate for elementary teachers was 42% ($n=1,874$). Return rates for schools ($n=76$) was 58.9%. The within-school return rates ranged from 100% to 29%. Two-way ANOVAs by gender and return rate were used to explore differences in responses between the 100% return-rate group and the other groups. This statistical analysis found no ($p<.01$) difference by return-rate group and the data were aggregated for further analysis using the classroom teacher as the unit of analysis. Using Chi-square tests of goodness-of-fit and ANOVAs where appropriate, characteristics of the teachers and schools in the returning sample were compared with those in schools not returning data and with the overall profile of teachers and schools in the state on selected variables. The respondents were not statistically significantly different from non-respondents and the sample was found to be representative of the teachers and school buildings across the state.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for teacher demographics and responses to the job satisfaction subscale. Cronbach's coefficient reliability

alpha was calculated for the subscale with the study sample (.80). Two-way ANOVAs (SAS GLM procedure was used because of the unequal numbers in each category) were used to test for differences in responses to the job satisfaction items by gender and years of teaching experience. Alpha level was set at $p < .001$ for the omnibus F with an additional criterion of an effect size

(h^2) of at least .01 (Keppel, 1982) because of the large n of the sample. A Scheffe ($p < .01$) was used to follow up significant omnibus F s.

Results

Responses were received from 1,877 teachers. Of the respondents answering the gender question, 1598 (85%) were female and 274 (15%) were male elementary school teachers. (There were 11, less than 1%, respondents who did not respond to the gender question.) Eighteen respondents did not respond to the "years of teaching experience" question. Thus, the total n for the analysis was 1848. The respondents by gender by years of teaching experience are presented in Table 1.

Place Table 1 about here

The modal response for "years of teaching experience" for each gender category was 16 to 20 years. It is obvious from this table that the n 's for each group are very different, thus, cell sizes for the ANOVA were unequal. Because of this difference, the SAS PROC GLM procedure was used. This procedure weighted the means before performing statistical comparisons (in contrast with the PROC ANOVA analysis). The Scheffe was chosen as the post hoc procedure to follow-up significant F 's because of the unequal n 's.

The ratings of job satisfaction by the total group are presented in Table 2.

Place Table 2 about here

Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability for the Job Satisfaction subscale with the data from this study was .80 with each item contributing to the overall reliability. The overall rating of job satisfaction by the total sample of elementary teachers was positive (5.09). All seven aspects of teaching received positive ratings, that is, they were all above the neutral 4.00 midpoint on the seven-point rating scale. The differences in job satisfaction were in degree rather than in kind. The elementary teachers rated "interaction with students" as the most positive aspect of their jobs (6.01). The teachers rated their satisfaction with "general work conditions" the least positively (4.47).

Table three presents the means and standard deviations of the job satisfaction ratings by gender and the six categories of years of teaching

Place Table 3 about here

experience. It is difficult to draw generalizations from descriptive Table 3. In general, mean ratings by gender appear to be less than one rating scale point (.20). There is an apparent mean difference by gender in ratings of satisfaction with salary in the 11 to 15 years of experience category ($M=5.00$; $F=6.00$). This difference appears to be in the same direction in the 16 to 20 year

category, but reverses in the 21 to 25 and 26 years and more categories. The mean ratings for degree of challenge of the job appear to be higher for female elementary teachers across categories of years of teaching experience except for the 26 years or more category.

Table 4. presents the statistically significant ($p < .001$, with an effect size of .01 or greater) differences by gender and years of teaching experience. There

Place Table 4 about here

were no statistically significant interactions between gender and years of teaching experience on any of the items or total scale score. There were no significant differences by gender or years of teaching experience in elementary teachers' ratings of satisfaction with salary [$F(11, 1832)=1.10, p=.351$]; opportunities for advancement [$F(11,1834)=2.56, p=.003$]; degree of autonomy [$F(11,1828)=2.22, p=.011$]; general work conditions [$F(11,1830)=2.23, p=.011$]; or interaction with students [$F(11,1828)=2.21, p=.011$]. Although there was a significant omnibus F for the total scale score, There were no statistically significant differences by gender [$F(1,1836)=7.44, p=.006$] or years of teaching experience [$F(1,1836)=0.94, p=.451$].

Although there were no statistically significant differences by years of teaching experience on elementary teachers ratings of challenge of the job by

years of teaching experience [$F(5,1831)=0.97, p=.43$], there was a statistically significant difference by gender ($p<.001$, effect size .02) on this item. Female elementary teachers rated the degree of challenge of the job (5.58) higher than did male elementary teachers (5.23). There were statistically significant differences in teachers' ratings of satisfaction with interactions with colleagues both by gender [$F(1,2834)=10.24, p=.000$] and by years of teaching experience [$F(5,1834)=3.88, p=.000$]. Teachers with 26 years and more teaching experience rated their satisfaction with interaction with colleagues lower than did teachers in the other five categories. Female teachers rated their satisfaction with interaction with colleagues higher (5.30) than did male teachers (5.11).

Discussion and Conclusions

This large sample of elementary school teachers working in 76 Ohio schools initiating their self-designed restructuring efforts, rated their job satisfaction positively on seven aspects of their jobs. All of the measures were above the 4.00 neutral midpoint of the seven-point Likert-type rating scale of the Job Satisfaction Subscale of The National Survey of Teacher Education Graduates (Freeman, Loadman, & Kennedy, 1994). Overall, elementary teachers rated their satisfaction with interaction with students the most positively (6.01) and the satisfaction with general working conditions the least positively (4.47). Three aspects of teaching received mean ratings between the

neutral midpoint and the positive five-point on the rating scale (1) salary (4.63), (2) autonomy (4.64), and (3) working conditions (4.47). Satisfaction with interactions with students was the only aspect of teaching that received a rating above the 6.00 point. There were no interaction effects between the variables of gender and years of teaching experience. Only one difference was found by years of teaching experience. Teachers with 26 years or more teaching experience rated their satisfactions with interaction with colleagues lower than did the teachers in the other five categories. Differences by gender were found on teachers' ratings of three aspects of teaching (1) the degree of challenge of the job, and (2) interaction with colleagues. In each instance, female elementary teachers rated their job satisfaction more positively. These gender differences were across years of teaching experience. Although male elementary teachers ratings of challenge of the job were lower than those of female teachers, they rated this aspect of teaching very positively (5.23 on a seven-point rating scale) indicating that they were well satisfied with the challenge of the job. The comparative lower ratings by male elementary teachers on interaction with colleagues ($M=5.11$; $F=5.40$) may be a function of socialization. Note, however, that male elementary teachers' rating was very positive. Elementary school teaching is a satisfying career for both male and female teachers. The challenge is to find ways to encourage young men to enter the field and to

support them through mentoring programs once they are there.

This study provided a broad look at teacher job satisfaction with a sample of teachers working in schools initiating restructuring. The results can be generalized only to the population of teachers in the 129 Venture Capital Schools elementary schools in Ohio. However, this is the first study to use a valid, reliable instrument to measure teacher job satisfaction in a large sample of teachers with cohort groups of "years of teaching experience" from five years and fewer to 26 years and more. As Venture Capital planning teams work to increase teacher participation in the schools, they should look first at the lower-rated aspects, salary, autonomy, and working conditions.

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Table 1.

Frequencies of Categories of Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	Female	Male	Total
Five years or fewer	300	49	349
Six to 10 years	264	45	309
11 to 15 years	236	41	277
16 to 20 years	312	53	365
21 to 25 years	285	42	327
26 years and more	180	41	221
Total	1577	271	1848

Note. Totals in this table do not sum to the total n of the sample (1877) because of non-response to questions of gender and years of teaching experience.

Table 2.

Ratings of Job Satisfaction All Teachers in the Sample (n=1877)

Satisfaction with...	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Salary/fringe benefits	1873	4.63	1.41
Opportunities for advancement	1873	5.02	1.42
Challenge of the job	1873	5.53	1.15
Autonomy/decision making	1870	4.64	1.39
General work conditions	1870	4.47	1.50
Interaction with Colleagues	1874	5.36	1.30
Interaction with Students	1874	6.01	0.97
Total Scale Score	1877	5.09	0.89

Note. Scale range: 1=very negative to 7=very positive.

Alpha reliability .80.

Table 3.

Teachers' Ratings of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

	Five Years or Fewer			Six to 10 Years			11 to 15 Years		
	Female N=300			Female N=264			Female N=236		
	Male N=49			Male N=45			Male=41		
Aspect of Job...	Gender	Mean	SD	Gender	Mean	SD	Gender	Mean	SD
Salary	F	4.74	1.32	F	4.63	1.39	F	4.60	1.37
	M	4.59	1.47	M	4.78	1.31	M	5.00	1.18
Advance	F	5.32	1.19	F	5.13	1.31	F	4.90	1.47
	M	4.76	1.57	M	4.69	1.55	M	4.85	1.41
Challenge	F	5.83	1.06	F	5.50	1.07	F	5.40	1.17
	M	5.33	1.14	M	5.24	1.37	M	5.44	1.18
Autonomy	F	4.95	1.21	F	4.62	1.26	F	4.52	1.45
	M	4.61	1.43	M	4.36	1.32	M	4.63	1.39
Working Conditions	F	4.77	1.45	F	4.36	1.43	F	4.18	1.51
	M	4.67	1.39	M	5.00	1.32	M	4.54	1.72
Colleagues	F	5.61	1.18	F	5.08	1.29	F	5.28	1.29
	M	5.02	1.35	M	4.84	1.17	M	5.12	1.52
Students	F	6.10	0.93	F	5.95	0.91	F	5.93	1.04
	M	5.88	0.93	M	5.76	1.09	M	5.83	1.02
Total Scale Score	F	5.33	0.79	F	5.04	0.84	F	4.98	0.90
	M	4.98	0.86	M	4.95	0.88	M	5.06	1.02

(Continued)

Table 3 (Continued).

Teachers' Ratings of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

	16 to 20 Years			21 to 25 Years			26 Years or More		
	Female N=312			Female N=285			Female N=180		
	Male N=53			Male N=42			Male=41		
Aspect of Job...	Gender	Mean	SD	Gender	Mean	SD	Gender	Mean	SD
Salary	F	4.61	1.47	F	4.57	1.48	F	4.63	1.49
	M	4.91	1.29	M	4.24	1.36	M	4.41	1.58
Advance	F	4.99	1.49	F	4.98	1.43	F	5.05	1.49
	M	4.60	1.67	M	4.81	1.42	M	4.98	1.41
Challenge	F	5.54	1.18	F	5.61	1.09	F	5.61	1.23
	M	5.17	1.14	M	5.12	1.13	M	5.12	1.00
Autonomy	F	4.60	1.45	F	4.67	1.47	F	4.70	1.48
	M	4.26	1.47	M	4.57	1.47	M	4.41	1.20
Working Conditions	F	4.46	1.51	F	4.37	1.52	F	4.52	1.57
	M	4.57	1.47	M	4.36	1.38	M	4.46	1.21
Colleagues	F	5.35	1.32	F	5.49	1.27	F	5.61	1.27
	M	4.96	1.34	M	5.33	1.44	M	5.51	1.25
Students	F	6.05	0.93	F	6.09	0.92	F	6.12	0.90
	M	5.83	0.94	M	5.76	1.19	M	6.05	1.05
Total Scale Score	F	5.09	0.90	F	5.11	0.88	F	5.18	0.92
	M	4.90	0.98	M	4.88	0.91	M	5.01	0.91

Table 4.

Analysis of Variance for Ratings of Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Salary/Fringe Benefits

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	1.10
Gender	1	0.08
Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.67
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.69
Error	1832	(1.99)

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Opportunities for Advancement

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	2.56
Gender	1	9.16
Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.66
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.88
Error	1834	(1.99)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

* $p < .001$

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued).

Analysis of Variance for Ratings of Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Level of Challenge of the Job

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>E</u>
Model	11	4.40*
Gender	1	21.16*
Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.97
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.28
Error	1831	(1.28)

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Level of Autonomy

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>E</u>
Model	11	2.22
Gender	1	5.49
Years of Teaching Experience	5	3.16
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.62
Error	1828	(1.91)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

* $p < .001$

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued).

Analysis of Variance for Ratings of Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with General Work Conditions

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	2.84
Gender	1	2.96
Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.62
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.30
Error	1830	(2.23)

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Interaction with Colleagues

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	4.75*
Gender	1	10.24*
Years of Teaching Experience	5	3.88*
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.84
Error	1834	(1.64)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

* $p < .001$

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued).

Analysis of Variance for Ratings of Aspects of Job Satisfaction by Gender and Years of Teaching Experience

Dependent variable: Satisfaction with Interaction with Students

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	2.21
Gender	1	5.21
Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.88
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.23
Error	1828	(1.42)

Dependent variable: Total Scale Score

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Model	11	3.33*
Gender	1	7.44
Years of Teaching Experience	5	0.94
Gender by Years of Teaching Experience	5	1.04
Error	1828	(0.77)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

* $p < .001$